

Our Young People

The Convert's Prayer

REV. S. W. YOUNG

Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?
Make Thy vision to me clear;
Teach me how to know the true,
Help me from the false to steer.

Blind am I and weak from sin;
Let Thy sunshine flood my heart;
Bid Thy spirit reign within,
Winning power to impart.

Steadfast in the faith I'd be—
Firm as Zion's mountain stand:
In Thy service active, free,
Swift to run at Thy command.

Cause my love for Thee to grow;
Stir my hope to brighter flame,
And in darkness it will glow
When I speak Thy saving name.

Soon I'll see Thee as Thou art;
Know Thee as Thou knowest me;
Worship Thee with purer heart;
Serve Thee thru eternity.

—New York Observer.

PRAYER A NECESSITY—Matt. 26:36-46

Topic for Sunday, May 4

HOME READINGS

Mon., Apr. 28, The time for prayer, I Thes. 5:16-18
Tues., " 29, The subjects of prayer, Lk. 11:9-13
Wed., " 30, The manner of prayer, Jas. 4:6-10
Thurs., May 1, Confidence in prayer, Mt. 7:7-11
Fri., " 2, Power in prayer, Jas. 5:13-20
Sat., " 3, Answers to prayer, Mt. 21:17-22

There are two things which give us perfect confidence in the life of Jesus. First his unfailing insight into the right and wrong of every question he was called to meet; and second, his perfect ability to do the right rather than the wrong. These are just the powers we need to overcome the world and do the will of God.

But Jesus teaches us that these are just the powers that we may have thru him in proportion as we "grow up unto him in all things." He teaches that he derived his words and his works from the Father; that only by vital communion with the Father was he able to accomplish anything. He teaches further that we also may enter into and maintain this fellowship with the Father (John 14:21-24) but that without it we are powerless. (John 15:4)

How did Jesus maintain his union with the Father?

- 1 By the word with which he showed himself familiar. Luke 4:16.
- 2 By obedience, John 8:29.
- 3 By prayer, Luke 6:12.

It would be most helpful just to dwell upon the example of Jesus in prayer. Take a concordance and make a Bible reading on the subject. Nothing will impress the necessity of prayer upon you with greater power than this.

SOME PERVERSIONS OF PRAYER

(To be discussed in meeting if time permits)

- 1 Prayer is not the counting of beads or thoughtless repeating of a form tho that form be the model he gave us.
- 2 It is not a means of displaying piety as the Pharisees who prayed on the street-corners thought.
- 3 It is not for a cloak to cover hypocrisy in the life.
- 4 It is not for a display of oratory or language.
- 5 It is not merely to edify the people as some

think who prepare long written prayers for the public.

6 It is not merely for meditation and its reaction upon character altho this is good.

WHAT PRAYER IS FOR

But

7 Prayer is communion in which the soul goes out in praise for blessings and in petitions for needed help. Prayer is for answer.

HOW PRAYER HELPS

1 Against temptation, Matt. 26:21. If Jesus in the hour of his trial prayed so earnestly that beads of blood burst from him, how much more do we need to pray that we also may overcome.

2 Against outward temptation, Matt. 6:13. If we pray to be kept away from trial we will not carelessly keep the company of bad people or bad books.

3 Against temptation within. Gal. 5:16. By the Spirit within we overcome the flesh and by prayer we gain the mind of the Spirit.

4 Power for service thru prayer. Acts 1:8; Luke 11:13. We are never to seek power for display but always for unselfish service.

5 The Christ-life thru prayer, John 15:7. Touch with Christ will cause all the Christian virtues to bud and blossom.

6 Prayer a necessity of love, I John 1:3. Imagine a child loving its parents and yet seldom speaking to them. A prayerless life cannot but be a loveless life.

7 Prayer a necessity for daily needs, Matt. 6:7-11; I John 5:16.

We are to expect answer to prayer even tho the answer be a denial or a command to wait. Of how many of us it is true, "Ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures." Jas. 4:3.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Is there any prescribed attitude or time or place given for prayer? Why not?
- 2 Why is kneeling a good attitude in prayer?
- 3 What are some of the objects for which we should pray?
- 4 Why should we have regular times if possible for prayer?
- 5 How can we "pray without ceasing"?
- 6 What are some of the conditions of effectual prayer?
- 7 Why should we have public as well as private prayer?
- 8 How may we better follow the example of Jesus in prayer?

C. F. YODER.

Service And Reckoning

In the parable of the talents, recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, we have a suggestion of the individual responsibility of the disciples of Christ for service in the present dispensation. In the old dispensation the service of God was performed by a certain class, the Priests and Levites; but in the Christian dispensation we are taught that all are so far Priests and Levites, and that to every disciple the obligation of service belongs. The parable of the ten virgins seems to suggest to us the necessity of personal preparation against the time of the Lord's return, while this parable is on responsibility for service.

By the delivery of his goods to his servants we can but understand that distribution of gifts and responsibilities which is without doubt laid upon each of us. "He gave gifts to men." To some he has given one

kind of gift and to others another; but to all talents have been conferred. To some the gift of teaching and preaching; to others that of spiritual ability in other directions, the gift of prayer for instance; to others wealth and social position; to others that of great personal influence—all these varying gifts to be used in his service. It is a great honor thus to be called into fellowship with Jesus Christ in the service of God and made partners with him in the great work which the Father gave him to do. These gifts have been distributed to every one according to his several ability. Natural ability and gifts conferred are clearly discriminated. The gifts of God are not recklessly or blindly scattered among the disciples, but bestowed wisely, according to capacity, that the best use may be made of them. Our Lord does not overload a disciple whose natural ability is small with gifts which are too great for him to use. There are disciples who can do splendid service within a limited sphere who would make a complete failure if larger responsibilities were put upon them, just as some generals make splendid division commanders who would be totally unfit to command the whole army; good fighters but poor tacticians, or lacking in wisdom and decision of character. They can fight under orders, but would not be able to determine, themselves, when and how the blow ought to be struck. The eloquent Apollos could not have done the great work which Paul was called on to do. It is evident that Joshua, who did such splendid service in subduing the land, could not have done the great work which Moses did in the wilderness. The Christian merchant has a larger gift than his porter or book-keeper, tho the latter may serve God as acceptably in their subordinate positions as their chief in the larger place.

The division of talents into portions of five, two and one, goes to show that while the gifts differ they are universally distributed among the disciples. He of least ability is not left without his talent. And when we remember that a talent of money in those days was equal to about \$5,000 in our money, considering the difference of values then and now, it surely suggests that the least of the disciples has natural ability enough to be entrusted with large responsibility. It will not do for the least disciple to excuse himself on the ground that he has neither ability nor talent with which to serve God. All have natural ability, no matter how small, and to all at least one talent is given, and that by no means a small one.

The different way in which the servants used their talents is suggestive. Two of them at once began to trade with theirs. They did not wait for opportunities to come to them, but "went and traded." There are those Christians who, like the liberal man, are always devising liberal things; are on the lookout for service and anxious to make the best and most use of God's trust. Two thoughts seem to animate them. First, their